

# Veterans Memorial Building closes its doors

## Earthquake damage causes indefinite closure of Santa Cruz structure

By TODD GUILD

OF THE REGISTER-PAJARONIAN

Damage from the 1989 Loma Prieta Earthquake has forced the indefinite closure of the Veterans Memorial Building in Santa Cruz, county officials announced Thursday.

Experts were called to inspect the building after manager Tim Bratton noticed falling stucco and called the Santa Cruz County General Services Department. Inspectors later

saw "significant" damage to the concrete in the building.

In a letter to the Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors, architect Bill Fisher said that another strong earthquake could pose a "risk of injury or death to the occupants of the auditorium."

"We had no choice but to immediately shutter the building," Fisher said.

Fisher, owner of William Fisher Architecture in Santa Cruz, said

such concrete damage has not been seen at the Veterans Memorial Building in Watsonville.

"We've looked through that building and haven't noticed any similar damage," he said.

Fisher said Friday that the damage probably appeared minor to the people who have occupied the building over the years. He added that the threat to occupants was

See VETS, page A8



The Santa Cruz County Veterans Memorial Building in downtown Santa Cruz closed Thursday due to structural damage.

Tarmo Hannula  
Register-Pajaronian



Tarmo Hannula/Register-Pajaronian

World War II veteran Maurice Ricketts has been coming to the Veterans Memorial Building since 1947.

## VETS

From page A1

minimal, unless a major earthquake were to strike.

"Probably, we don't have a monster lurking there," he said.

Still, despite the large number of people affected by the closure, county officials wanted to "err on the side of safety," Santa Cruz County Parks director Joe Schultz said.

The closure will likely last for several months as architects determine whether there is any other damage that hasn't been noticed, and begin the repairs.

Schultz said the project is likely to take months, and that the cost of the work will present financial concerns.

"It's going to be a dollar figure that could be a problem in this budget climate," he said. "I don't know what that the outcome will be."

Scott Kennedy, a spokesman for the Resource Center for Nonviolence in Santa Cruz, said the Veterans Memorial Building

was one of the few places that offered a venue that could hold 100 to 200 people, perfect for the dozen or so events, such as speaking engagements, that the center plans each year.

But a more important issue, Kennedy said, is having a place for veterans, particularly as the U.S. is involved in two wars.

"I hope there will be an unequivocal message from the county that having a place for them is of utmost importance," he said.

The Spanish Colonial Revival-style Veterans Memorial Building in Santa Cruz was dedicated on November 11, 1932, on what was called Armistice Day and renamed Veterans Day after World War II.

The county Human Services Department is relocating its Veterans Services office to the county's Emeline Avenue campus, and many of the weekly events have been permanently canceled. Schultz said he has contacted the Watsonville Veterans Memorial Building to possibly reschedule some events there.



The Veterans Memorial Building's historical landmark Blue Plaque award is shown.

Tarmo Hannula  
Register-Pajaronian